

REMARKS

Presently, claims 3, 15, 19, 20, 31-33, 35-38, 40, 41, 43, 45-49 and 50-58 are pending in the application. Dependent claims 39, 42, 44 and 50 have been canceled. Independent claim 3 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 39. Independent claim 15 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 42. Dependent claim 19 has been amended to be consistent with the amendments to independent claim 15. Independent claim 31 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 44. Independent claim 45 has been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claim 50. Dependent claim 51 has been amended to be consistent with the amendments to independent claim 45. New independent claim 54 has been added to recite the allowable subject matter of independent claim 15 and dependent claim 43. New independent claim 57 has been added to recite the allowable subject matter of independent claim 3 and dependent claim 42. New dependent claims 55-56 and 58, corresponding to claims 19-20 and 40, have been added to depend from new independent claims 54 and 57, respectively. Accordingly, no new matter has been added to the application by the foregoing amendments.

Allowable Subject Matter

The Examiner has objected to claims 39, 42-44 and 50 as being dependent upon rejected base claims, but stated that these claims would be allowable if rewritten in independent form to include all limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicant thanks the Examiner for this indication of allowable subject matter.

Independent claim 3 has been amended to incorporate the features of original claim 39. Thus, claim 39 has been rewritten in independent form to incorporate all features of the base claim (original claim 3). Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 3 is allowable and that the Examiner's objection to claim 39 is overcome. Dependent claims 37, 38, 40 and 41 are allowable at least by their dependency on amended independent claim 3.

Independent claim 15 has been amended to incorporate the features of original claim 42. Thus, claim 42 has been rewritten in independent form to incorporate all features of the base claim (original claim 15). Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 15 is allowable and that the Examiner's objection to claim 42 is overcome. Dependent claims 19, 20 and 43 are allowable at least by their dependency on amended independent claim 15.

Independent claim 31 has been amended to incorporate the features of original claim 44. Thus, claim 44 has been rewritten in independent form to incorporate all features of the base claim (original claim 31). Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 31 is allowable and that the Examiner's objection to claim 44 is overcome. Dependent claims 32, 33, 35 and 36 are allowable at least by their dependency on amended independent claim 31.

Independent claim 45 has been amended to incorporate the features of original claim 50. Thus, claim 50 has been rewritten in independent form to incorporate all features of the base claim (original claim 45). Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 45 is allowable and that the Examiner's objection to claim 50 is overcome. Dependent claims 46-49 and 51-53 are allowable at least by their dependency on amended independent claim 45.

New independent claim 54 incorporates the features of original claims 15 and 43. Thus, claim 43 has been rewritten in independent form to incorporate all features of the base claim (original claim 15). Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 54 is allowable and that the Examiner's objection to claim 43 is overcome. Dependent claims 55 and 56 are allowable at least by their dependency on new independent claim 54.

New independent claim 57 incorporates the features of original claims 3 and the allowable subject matter of claim 42. Therefore, Applicant respectfully submits that independent claim 57 is allowable. Dependent claim 58 is allowable at least by its dependency on new independent claim 57.

Dependent claims 39, 42, 44 and 50 have been canceled. As noted above, dependent claim 43 is allowable at least by its dependency on amended independent

claim 15. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's objection to claims 39, 42-44 and 50 are respectfully requested.

Prior Art Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102(e)

The Examiner has rejected claims 3, 15, 19, 20, 31, 32, 35, 36, 38, 45 and 49 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,933,811 to Angles et al ("Angles") Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

Although not necessarily agreeing with the Examiner, to further prosecution of the present application, independent claims 3, 15, 31 and 45 have been amended to incorporate the allowable subject matter of claims 39, 42, 44 and 50, respectively. Accordingly, independent claims 3, 15, 31 and 45 are believed to be allowable over Angles.

Dependent claims 19, 20, 32, 35, 36, 38 and 49 are allowable at least by their dependency on independent claims 3, 15, 31 and 45, respectively. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection of claims 3, 15, 19, 20, 31, 32, 35, 36, 38, 45 and 49 are respectfully requested.

Prior Art Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103(a)

The Examiner has rejected claims 33, 37, 40, 41, 46-48 and 51-53 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Angles in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,353,849 to Linsk. Applicant respectfully traverses this rejection.

As noted above, amended independent claims 3, 31 and 45 are believed to be allowable. Dependent claims 33, 37, 40, 41, 46-48, and 51-53 are allowable at least by their dependency on independent claims 3, 31 and 45, respectively. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's rejection of claims 33, 37, 40, 41, 46-48 and 51-53 are respectfully requested.

Conclusion

In view of the foregoing arguments, Applicant respectfully submits that the Examiner's objection and rejections have been overcome, and that the application, including claims 3, 15, 19, 20, 31-33, 35-38, 40, 41, 43, 45-49 and 51-58, is in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the Examiner's objection and rejections and an early Notice of Allowance are respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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